

Whereas a great deal of writing has reduced Chinese Cubans to impersonal statistical figures, faceless enslaved victims and poster revolutionary heroes, López draws us simply to a few family stories showing the human side of history. Although families were torn apart by wars, revolutions and poverty, family letters, remittances and occasional travel across the Pacific helped hold them together. The lives of Francisco Luis, Pastor Pelayo and José Bu, and many of their living descendants in China, Cuba and elsewhere, vividly capture the essence of the Chinese Cuban journey: how they came to Cuba indentured and gained their freedom, how they became part of the global Chinese diaspora, and how they developed into an essential part of the national identity of Cuba today.

López's work is a welcome contribution to both Chinese and regional studies as well as transnational history. An important first step towards providing us a comprehensive understanding of the Chinese people in Cuba, especially after 1874, her work further raises critical questions about the history of Chinese migration in general, and to the Americas in particular. Did Chinese migrants and their descendants in Cuba's eastern provinces, such as Santiago and Holguin, follow the same pattern as in Havana? To what extent did the experience of Chinese Cubans reflect global migration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? These would be fruitful topics for further investigation, but before these questions are examined, we should thank López because *la gente sin historia*, as Cuban historian Juan Pérez de la Riva called the Chinese Cubans, have now secured a stronger voice of their own through this publication.

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Irene Strodthoff, *Chile and Australia: Contemporary Transpacific Connections from the South* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. xvii + 213, £63.50, hb.

This is an important and innovative book that traces the comparing trajectories of structural change between Australia and Chile in times of increasing globalisation. Focusing on the economic and cultural dynamics of nation-building in both countries the author tracks a path along which the asymmetrical connections between Chile and Australia appear and disappear.

These transpacific presences and absences, as Irene Strodthoff argues throughout the book, are epitomised in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that both countries signed in 2008, not so much as a consequence of the increasingly close relationship that both countries have developed over the last 20 years, as the book argues, but as a consequence of the impact of international power politics on trade liberalisation and organised labour and the significant growth of FTA activity across the Asia-Pacific region that goes well beyond the Australia-Chile bilateral agreement.

The book is organised in six chapters and the temporal frame Strodthoff invokes to delimit her study is the celebration of bicentenaries in both countries: Australia 1988 and Chile 2010. This coincides with the longest period of economic growth ever recorded in both countries, and where both countries arguably emerge as middle-powers in the Asia-Pacific region.

The book sets itself to compare Chile and Australia in two distinct layers. The first layer looks at how both nations project inwardly notions of identity and how official

histories of nation are reproduced in the printed press, thence expanding the ambiguities and ambivalences of these contested national projects. The key chapters here deal with how migration and indigenous resistance movements question the imagined national polity in each country, and how both countries negotiate projections of masculinities and race in their ongoing and contested projects of nation-building.

The second layer of analysis hopes to unveil the way dominant projections of national identities permeate the construction of the bilateral Australia-Chilean relationship in light of mutual economic and commercial interests. The key chapters here deal with how the bilateral relation has been made visible in the popular imagination and the media particularly since 1990. While the author rightly notes that the bilateral interest goes back to the early nineteenth century with important trade routes established between Sydney and Valparaiso, the book fails to mention other instances where the gazes of both nations cross in meaningful ways. One such way, which offers yet a different perspective on transpacific connections from the south is the active role that Australia and Chile have played in Antarctica since 1959.

Despite developing a novel approach to a topic that remains under-studied the book is uneven and at times frustrating. The book is at times unsatisfying because it reads more like a doctoral thesis than a book. It reads more like a very good thesis published as an unrevised dissertation. And it has more than the acceptable limit of typographical errors together with some issues of written expression that are not the sole responsibility of the author.

A first issue that seems unsettling is the lack of critical engagement with the genealogies of neoliberalism in both countries especially considering that both countries have been quintessential for the realisation of the neoliberal project. The book claims to construct 'an archaeology of sense' by defining the symbolic power of cultural expressions, geopolitical spaces, and bilateral points of contact between the two countries. But despite the clever move to describe the implicit gender politics of neoliberalism (in reference to the work of Raewyn Connell) all the book in effect ends up doing is opting for comfortable commonalities and simple schemes to identify general patterns at a molar level, neglecting to confront critically how the bilateral connection is actually grounded in that 'metabolic rift' caused by expanding capitalist productivity.

Strodtzoff maintains that 'the dominant discourse of each nation around economic progress [*sic*] and regional exceptionality [*sic*] has led to a closer approach between these two countries, albeit in a context of bilateral asymmetries and internal fissures regarding national cohesion'. This is outright questionable. The use of the term economic progress throughout the book is surprisingly naive and the fallacy of Chilean exceptionality is tiresome and has been dutifully critiqued by Chilean scholars. Furthermore, the history of Australia in Asia and Oceania is radically different from the history of Chile in Latin America to the point that we lose the plane of comparison.

A second flaw in the analysis is the critical discourse analysis of the coverage of bilateral news across national newspapers. Here the comparison seems to be more between Santiago and Sydney than Chile and Australia. And this is a problem across the whole book. Sydney is not Australia (and the *Sydney Morning Herald* is not a national daily newspaper) and Santiago is not Chile. And this is clear in the selection of 16 organised and unexpected events occurring between 1990 and 2010 and reportedly covered by daily national newspapers in each country.

A third subject that remains unresolved or unclear is how the author brings into dialogue some of the perspectives of southern theory (Connell) and decolonial thinking (mostly through the work of Aníbal Quijano) as a way of offering ‘a new epistemological approach to understand how these two nations imagine and discursively construct each other in light of the FTA’. It is not entirely convincing, as the author claims, that the analysis ‘reveals bilateral fractures, similitudes, and contingencies through a theoretical manoeuvre that introduces a setting of transnational connections, reimaginings, and rearticulations in a south-south perspective’. The argument is clear and novel when engaging with Connell’s view that globalisation and the neo-liberal agenda have strengthened patterns of hegemonic masculinity instigated by a global corporate economy that shapes State-business governmentalities.

Despite these perceived shortcomings this is a compelling and well-researched book with several virtuous moments of scholarship that provoke surprise and instigate further deliberation.

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James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, *Imperialism and Capitalism in the Twenty-First Century: A System in Crisis* (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), pp. vi + 247, £55.00, hb.

Latin America is at a crossroads: will it follow a capitalist or socialist path? This is one of the questions James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer pose in the introduction to this book. Unfortunately, they do not make a serious attempt to answer it. Clues are provided but a rigorous analysis is lacking. Their failure to explore one of the key points raised in the introduction draws attention to one of the weaknesses of the book. Little effort is made to link chapters and develop themes and ideas. Consequently, the book, which includes a chapter written by Raúl Delgado Wise and Humberto Márquez Covarrubias, resembles a collection of standalone essays rather than a single coherent volume. Other flaws weaken the book. There is a significant amount of repetition and a lack of consistency within and between chapters. The sourcing is also inadequate. The reader is at times left wondering where facts and figures have been pulled from which seriously undermines the analysis. These flaws significantly reduce the appeal of the book. Nonetheless, it still shines light on a number of important issues and provides a welcome tonic to studies which fail to recognise the strains and tensions at the heart of capitalism.

Of the book’s 13 chapters, seven focus largely or wholly on Latin America, while the others consider the ‘crisis’ of world capitalism, the nature of imperialism, and, somewhat incongruously, the state of democracy in Egypt. The discussion of imperialism draws attention to the global imbalances in economic, political and military power that continue to shape development in Latin America. The authors highlight continuities in Latin America-United States relations but also acknowledge that ‘there are powerful reasons to consider the decline in US power as a long term and irreversible trend’ (p. 221). One of the factors cited for this change is the shift in world economic power towards Asia and the growing interest Latin American governments and businesses have shown in developing economic relations with the region.

Inequality is another important theme in the book. While the authors recognise the reductions in income inequality some Latin American governments have achieved over